



Foggy Bottom News

Published for and by the Citizens of Foggy Bottom

FOGGY BOTTOM: A HISTORY

by Antoinette J. Lee

[Ed. Note: With the following synoptic view of Foggy Bottom's past, we are initiating a semi-monthly column on the history of the neighborhood. The author will be covering major themes in chronological order, including natural topographical features, Foggy Bottom before L'Enfant, the Potomac waterfront settlement, the military/diplomatic connection, the arrival of George Washington University, the Georgetownization of Foggy Bottom, and the urban renewal era.]

Where is the Foggy Bottom Neighborhood?—roughly defined by the triangle formed by the White House, the Watergate, and Washington Circle. It is necessary to walk beyond the major thoroughfares and the tall office and apartment blocks to find the neighborhood.

HISTORY

Before the Capital City

The area now known as Foggy Bottom was caught up in the land divisions that were made in Maryland. In 1664, the area was part of the land grant known as Widdow's Mite. In 1763, a German emigrant, Jacob Funk purchased a tract of 130 acres in what was then Frederick County and laid out the town of Hamburg, likely named after the shipping center of his mother country. Also known as Funkstown, the town was roughly bounded by what is today H Street on the north, the Potomac River on the south, 19th street on the east, and 23rd Street on the west. The town was envisioned to benefit from its proximity to the junction of the Potomac River and Rock Creek and the wharves that would serve the settlement. Georgetown, founded in 1751 to the west, was already a prospering port town. But it is unlikely that much in the way of the town had developed on the site prior to the end of the eighteenth century. In 1800, the area was described as only sparsely settled, with more opulent homes at the northern and eastern edges of the area, and modest dwellings and commercial buildings closer to the Potomac waterfront.

1790 - Present

L'Enfant's plan for Washington provided a new pattern of development for the area. Like several other strategically placed points throughout the city, Washington Circle was seen as a focus around which a neighborhood would grow. As time passed, these dispersed settle-

ments would expand and merge, allowing for somewhat even growth across the city and yet retaining some of the local characteristics that had earliest defined the settlements.

This growth plan was reinforced by the location of markets. In 1803 Western Market was located on the southside of Pennsylvania Avenue, between 20th and 21st Streets, facing the present landmark Eye Street Row. This market served as the commercial and civic center for the area until 1852 when it burned. After then, the market was moved to 21st and K Streets.

The area's growth in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century witnessed the emerging difference between the high-ground neighborhood and that of the low-ground.

The high-ground area, north of E Street and east of 23rd, developed as a highly desirable residential enclave. It was initially marked by the construction along Pennsylvania Avenue of the "Seven Buildings" above 21st Street and the "Six buildings" west of 19th Street, both developments dating from the end of the 18th century. Other substantial dwellings, occupied by members of the military and the diplomatic corps, spread along E, F, G, H, and Eye Streets. By the 1800's, one observer noted that G Street "fairly rang with the wheels of carriages on Wednesdays, the official calling day for the Army and the Navy set, there was no gayer or more colorful street in all of Washington."

It was into this affluent area that George Washington University relocated in 1912, after wandering from College Hill (1821-early 1880's) to a downtown location (1884-1912). From its first building at 2023 G Street, the University gradually spread into other residential buildings along G Street, using some for extended periods of time as classrooms and offices and replacing others as funds allowed. In a relatively enlightened period of campus planning, the University produced the neo-Georgian Corcoran and Stockton Halls, two of a projected eight buildings intended to be "built solidly around the four sides of the block" defined by G and H Street, and 20th and 21st Streets. The Depression era was marked by a break in the neo-Georgian designs with Lisner, Stuart, and Bell Halls as examples of this more spartan period. In the 1950's, the new Hall of Government and the Engineering School on 23rd Street display

some aspirations to a more abundant architecture. In recent years, most of the new classroom and office buildings have closely resembled office blocks that could easily have been located along the present-day K Street.

The low-ground area was characterized by industrial and shipping activities and the working-class settlement it produced. In 1809, the Edwards and Way glass manufacturing plant was located near the 21st Street wharf. Later, the glass factory was joined by a brewery and even later by gas works. These industrial enterprises plus the construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal (begun in 1828) gave some substance to the claim for Washington not only as the capital city but also as a prosperous industrial center. The river and canal orientation of the low-ground settlement linked it with Georgetown, a short promenade away, and with the Navy Yard and the Arsenal. But the marshy and in some place desolate character of this area gave rise to its present day name, Foggy Bottom, where the "incessant croaking of frogs at night furnished material for ghost stories."

The reclamation of the miasmic Potomac Flats followed closely on the decline of the Potomac as a navigable river within the boundaries of the District. The filling in of the city canal, running along the present day Constitution Avenue, served as an initial step in the changed environment of the area. The Potomac Flats became Potomac Park, the grounds of which were stable enough to support the monuments that later adorned it.

Further upgrading of the area continued into the twentieth century, with the closing of the factories and the removal of the gas works. With the elimination of these sources of blue-collar employment, the area became attractive for the location of government buildings and to private investment. But the population of the low-ground area did not move out immediately. It became a source of slum studies and housing and planning recommendations. By the early 1950's, much of the area was undergoing piecemeal restoration in much the same way that Georgetown had in the 1930's and Capitol Hill also in the 1950's.

Today the Foggy Bottom neighborhood is a product of these forces of development. Substantial houses, such as the John Marshall House at 1801 F

NEXT MEETING:

MONDAY, MARCH 28

8 PM

St. Paul's Parish House
2430 'K' Street, NW

SQUARE 15

Today they tore it down. Although I wasn't intimately acquainted with the block above the Diplomat Cleaners, my friend had lived upstairs. We ate at Mellonas often and stopped in at Fricky's. I knew John, the shoemaker, and his son, Vito, the dry cleaner, I said hi to, but I don't think he knew me. I'd been in the locksmith's once or twice, but never the barber shop. So, I'd known for a year, I guess, that the block would be razed, with the exception of Fricky's and the Mellonas building. Of course we were all curious about the future plan, and it was a topic of conversation in the neighborhood. But apparently I'd never imagined the buildings gone, I'd just talked about it.

Last night I was passing by, cursing the icy sidewalk, and I stopped to look up at the old buildings in the block. Empty. It really gripped me. A door flapped in the wind, I could actually smell the mustiness of rooms having been lived in. I became momentarily frightened of transients possibly staying there now. No heat. Windows broken, I moved on.

Today as I was hurrying to the store I looked up and they were tearing it down. It made me stop in my tracks, I was so shocked. It was actually happening. Thin air where the block used to be.

Reflecting came easily to me as I walked. Remember that little balcony above the Diplomat Cleaners where the tenants had a hibachi? The smell of steaks broiling in the summer would cause me to look up, wave at the chef, and admire the stained glass windows. The clock in the barber shop I'd check every time I passed by. Remember the signs, Se Habla Espanol, Plant on Premises, and finally, Please Pick up Your Shoes?

Well, it's not the most beautiful block in the world, but it was something. Now it's gone, a memory, whatever that means. Something subject to distortion, to nostalgia, to be forgotten.

R. Ewoldsen

INTRIGUE RESTAURANT

HAPPENINGS

A public hearing convened on March 1, the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board ordered that the New Hampshire Avenue door of the Intrigue restaurant be no longer used as an entrance.

The hearing was held to consider the reissuance of a liquor license for the Intrigue restaurant, 824 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W. The re-application of the license was protested by two Foggy Bottom residents who alleged that the Intrigue had violated aspects of the ABC Act. The Board ordered the Intrigue to take certain action to conform to the law by March 15.

The protestants represented by counsel, claimed that the restaurant violated a provision of the law which required that, in a residentially zoned neighborhood, the entrance to a restaurant in a residential hotel must be entirely within the building itself and that no signs be visible from the outside. The restaurant was found to have been using the bar as an entrance opening directly on New Hampshire Avenue. The property is zoned as residential.

Letters to the Editor

Open letter to Foggy Bottom Association members & friends:

Feb. 26, 1977

Bravo for a beautifully written explanation and article on "The Zoning Game". Not only did Ward Bucher enlighten me, but I enjoyed his sense of humor in the details.

Henrietta Y. Zoltrow
922 24th St., N.W. Apt. #505
Washington, D.C. 20037

RIGHT TURN ON RED FOR DC — A CONCERNED CITIZEN'S COMMENTS TO THE FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS

Quite a different thing from pedestrian rights are "Pedestrians' Rights", and the latter are being threatened by a bill introduced to the City Council by our councilman, John A. Wilson, to permit right-on-red turns in the District. His sole defense of the bill, which will inevitably raise the pedestrian death count of 37 in 1976, is that it may facilitate the obtaining of federal funds if included in the District plans for energy conservation. This, in the opinion of many pedestrians (and voters), represents utter nonsense, since the only way that energy could be saved on a right-on-red theory, and then in minuscule amounts, would consist in permitting the driver to turn without stopping, the theory being that energy is being wasted if the car is stopped and

the engine is running. Woe to the pedestrian! If the driver stops for the pedestrian to cross, no energy is saved at all, and therein lies the canard.

There is attached a letter to the editor setting forth the arguments against the proposal, a copy of which has been furnished each council member. These arguments deserve the support of pedestrians who are concerned about personal safety and freedom from bodily harm. If you agree, take action! The District Council plans to have its energy (?) package completed by March 28, 1977. A public hearing on this issue should be a required first step.

Submitted by Paul Cullinan, 2475 Va. Ave., N.W. #229, Wash., D.C. COPY of letter to the WASHINGTON POST follows:

February 21, 1977

To the Editor:

A feature in the Washington Post of February 17, 1977, states that last fall city officials insisted that right-on-red turns would not be allowed in the District because the Nation's Capital is too congested with cars and pedestrians. Now, Councilman John A. Wilson has introduced a bill to permit such turns, and Douglas Schneider, the city's transportation department director, has changed his mind in favor of permitting such turns. He says: "We will comply with the Energy Conservation Act". That is a canard, and it is misleading. The Energy Conservation Act nowhere requires turn-on-red permission, though one of its implementing, bureaucratic regulations may provide that, unless there is such permission, \$300,000 dollars in aid might be forfeited. To permit such turns for \$300,000 dollars is a surrender of pedestrian safety, not to mention the hard-fought-for Home Rule to the urging of a silly federal regulation most acceptable for the traffic control of a cross-road in the wheat field area of Kansas.

Director Schneider says, according to the reporter, that studies have shown that right-on-red turns do not increase accidents significantly (emphasis added). That is a horrendous and shocking attitude. Pedestrian injuries and death are accidents. Does the director think that even one death, even one broken hip, resulting from such turns is insignificant? There were 34 pedestrians killed in 1976 without the added risk of right-on-red turns.

Unfortunately, the District drivers in general entertain a light regard for the rights of pedestrians. One can project what would happen if a right-on-red turn ordinance were adopted. You have only to observe the lack of consideration exercised by drivers when making either a right or left turn on green. In either case they are turning into a red light, and the rights of pedestrians in such a situation, despite a green light in their favor, are generally ignored. This is especially flagrant where the green is supported by a "walk" light for the pedestrians. In most cases, the "walk" light is ignored by cars turning into such streets, and the pedestrians are forced to run, dodge, or chance being hit. Easily observable examples of this are myriad.

On the basis of the foregoing situation presently existing, one shudders at the prospect for pedestrians' chances in a right-on-red situation. It then becomes a question of whether the pedestrians' right to cross "stopped" traffic, supported by a green light in their favor, will prevail over the drivers' right to turn right on red. There is no reason to expect courtesy in such a situation in light of the disregard with which pedestrians' rights are treated under present circumstances.

And therein lies the farce of the federal regulation as it respects the District, and the reason why the energy conservation argument is specious and insupportable. The only way that any amount of energy could be saved by this plan, and even then in truly insignificant amounts, would be for the driver, making a right-on-red turn, to do so without stopping—even to permit a pedestrian, having the right of way by virtue of a green light in his favor, to cross in front of him! If the driver is courteous, where is the saving of energy? If he is not, and experience and observation tend to support that sad thesis in a majority of cases, how is a pedestrian to cross any intersection?

Sincerely,
Paul H. Cullinan

Foggy Bottom Farmer



If you think that you'd like to be an organic gardener, begin with sanitation; it has a dual aspect. The surface debris that could harbor last year's insect and disease problems can be turned to useful compost. Rake up every leaf and branch; the action in time provides humus also provides disease control.

A compost pile, pyramidal in shape to shed rain, can be of any size. Its construction is simple—alternating four inch thick layers of the vegetative refuse and soil. If you are a balcony gardener the composting can be done in a sturdy, light-proof garbage bag. Last year's potting soil will aid the decomposition of this year's plant clippings, as will sweepings from the balcony floor, and trips to the incinerator room will be eliminated.

For this year's potting, use only new soil, sterilized and disease-free.

There's still plenty of time to start plants indoors from seed. For us, morning glory, zinnia and marigold have been the easiest to grow. Tender annuals such as petunia are difficult to start at home and should be purchased in flats. Three rules for indoor starting: (1) use ground sphagnum moss instead of soil; it is sterile and will avoid the disappointments of "damping off"; (2) Avoid a location where there may be gas fumes from a kitchen stove; (3) cover your seedling flat or tray with a sheet of glass or clear plastic for humidity control. Ventilate daily.

A walk along the Potomac can gain you food for body and mind. Turn down-stream and on the grassy slopes gather the first leaves of the dandelion for salad or omelet. If you know where there is dock or sorrel, the first asparagus-like shoots also are fine in an omelet, or marinated like artichoke hearts.

For food for the mind turn upstream past Key Bridge to the streamside floodplain areas away from the beaten paths; Virginia bluebells are there, and sometimes you will see a slim, pigeon-sized Tern hovering above the water-eyes and long bill pointed down. He'll plummet, disappear below the surface and then break it again with wings spraying water and a wiggling silver catch. AND... APOLOGIES... for the incorrect garden catalog info on January's column. When we went to press, this year's catalogs had not yet been published, so the addresses given were from last year's publications. Here are two good ones:

WAYSIDE GARDENS (which has moved from Ohio)
Hodges, South Carolina 29695

GEORGE W. PARK SEED COMPANY
Greenwood, South Carolina 29647 (Park's Flower Book)

William S. Lattin

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Alice Drane Taylor passed away on February 17, 1977, at the age of 103.

Mrs. James Lawrence Taylor, nee Mary Alice Drane, was a quiet, genteel lady, gracious in manner, conservative in habits and devoted to the traditions of family life. She was born July 14, 1873 and almost reached her 104th birthday.

We of Potomac Plaza are better for having had her among us, and her memory will remain fresh in the hearts of her loved ones and host of friends.

HOPE HART

PATRONIZE

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Artists Pam Palco
Bill Lattin

Photographer Alice Plaisted
Printer Circle Graphics

All announcements, letters, articles, etc., welcome but must be typed. Send to:

FOGGY BOTTOM NEWS
c/o West End Library
24th and L Sts., NW
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Next Edition's Deadline FRIDAY, APRIL 1

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers. Their appearance here constitutes neither an endorsement nor official policy of the Foggy Bottom Association.

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SEEN AROUND THE BOTTOM

- did any of you happen to see the article in the Post about how to lose 5 to 25 pounds by walking? If you did be sure that you read it carefully; the walking alone won't do it as I can attest. **YOU MUST KNOCK OFF SOME OF THOSE CALORIES** along with the walking. Walking, I'm managing but I'm not doing any good with the calories; in fact I'm gaining from walking and eating. Something has got to go; the walking, maybe?
- While it has been coming for a long time but it seems to be finally here; **WEST END DEVELOPMENT**. There's real activity around the Sealtest Dairy plot, 25th and Pa. Avenue's southwest corner is gone (and I bet some of us have forgotten already what was there for so many years). Three new townhouses have been built in the 2300 block of L Street (take a look, they are interesting); and the Washington Circle Houses are moving right along. Keep your eyes open in the West End Development conclave—With Washington Circle as the hub—down K to 27th; up New Hampshire to 21st, to M and West on M to 23rd and skeewagged over to the Rock Creek Parkway. All inside that area will be changing drastically as the months roll by; keep your eyes open; it should be interesting.
- Speaking of changes, Councilman Jerry A. Moore, Jr. Chrmn. of the Committee on Transportation and Environmental Affairs, has announced that there will be a public hearing on March 22, 1977 to consider the **CLOSING OF EYE STREET** between 23rd and 24th. The public hearing will be held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 2430 K St at 7:30 PM. Come participate.
- The Washington Post carried an extensive article recently on **SCALE** insects. Apparently it is that time again. The FBA News has carried several articles on this subject over the past few years. If you didn't keep your copies and want some information on **SCALE** let us know and we'll see if we can help.
- In my wandering around I picked up some personal news: While Dick and Pam Palco were vacationing in Las Vegas they visited with Nancy Lee. Dick as you know is a former FBA President. Nancy left the Bottom a few years ago to work for Senator Cannon in Nevada.
- In case you've wondered who all those people are who have been going into the Columbia Plaza it is annual meeting time for quite a few of the Cooperative Apartments in the Bottom. Columbia Plaza graciously makes their facilities available for this purpose.
- And, if you have seen what appears to be a policemen convention around the Potomac Plaza don't think they are being raided. Instead they are being protected. The police Department has made their **SECURITY INSPECTION AND OPERATION IDENTIFICATION** for apartments in the Potomac Plaza. Upon request Officers showed PP residents a

security film; checked out the apartment, and made arrangements with individual residents to mark their personal belongings with identification which can be used to assist in recovery of personal belongings if ever stolen. This is a good program, available to everyone, and free. If you as an individual, or an apartment or office building complex are interested in participating in such a program just contact Officer Weeks, Lt. Beaver, Sgt. Hartke or anyone who answers the telephone at #626-2658 or 626-2000. They will be glad to set up a program for you.

- National Park Service personnel has been seen pruning the bushes and trees in their parks in our area and fertilizing the lawns; hopefully the District will be around soon to take care of their parks so that our entire area will be ready for Spring. (They are our parks, entrusted to NPS & DC for loving care)
- As our area becomes more peopled traffic hazards become more numerous; be careful. Several near tragedies have been luckily averted

recently but one of our Bottom residents wasn't so lucky; she was hit by a car and badly shaken up.

- Has anyone seen the Morning Doves nesting in the Tulip tree at the Potomac Plaza? I understand that the young appear just about the time the Tulips bloom in the Juarez Park.
- Speaking of traffic hazards, Paul Cullinan a Foggy Bottom Member, feels strongly enough about the proposed **RIGHT TURN ON RED** rule for the District of Columbia that he has fired off a strongly worded letter to the full City Council. I feel strongly about the present and potential traffic hazards in our neighborhood and asked Paul's permission to reproduce his comments in full. The subject is a serious one; it concerns life, death and energy conservation (related subjects). Paul's article to the Foggy Bottom News and his letter to the Washington Post are both reproduced separately in this Newspaper for your information and action should you care to take a position.

Mary E. Healy

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The AMERASIAN CENTER is nonprofit/nonpolitical and is located at 2142 F Street, NW (near George Washington University). It is open to the public free of charge, Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m., other hours by appointment. For more information on volunteering or on current art shows/events, call 331-0129 or 965-4390.



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Courses at GWU

Spring is a good time to look into some of the advantages of living in the neighborhood of a major urban university—specifically, George Washington University. Pursuing an education is one. Not only the full-time, degree-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel variety of education, but also the one-course-at-a-time options both on campus and at a variety of nearby off-campus locations, the how-to-get-there-from-here counseling groups, the getting-back-into-academia refreshers, and the growing selection of noncredit programs to sharpen your professional skills. Many of these special programs are available during the summer, and others have late spring information sessions scheduled for those who are thinking of fall registration.

Like those of many urban universities, more than half of GW's student body is part-time. In the off-campus programs administered by the College of General Studies (676-7065) for off-campus schedules year-round; the Summer Sessions Office (676-6370) for regular semester courses on campus. Degree candidates do get preference in registration, and you must meet prerequisites to enroll in upper level or graduate courses, but if you're qualified your chances are good.

And now is the time to come in and talk about admission to degree programs, either on campus or off. Many programs have specific cut-off dates for application, and/or require scores from national tests that are given only on specified dates. Be sure to investigate these for programs in the School of Government and Business Administration or the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, in particular.

The University offers some 50 degrees. You've probably heard of most of the traditional majors, but what would you think of doing your graduate work in Legislative Affairs, or Museum Education, or Art Therapy. Or even setting up your own Special Studies program. You define your objectives, and the Graduate School will help you plan a personal program of study.

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